



FTA's Robert Patrick in Louisiana

For those who do not know, Robert (Bob) Patrick is Regional Administrator for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Region VI, which includes Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. The Region VI offices are located in Fort Worth. Mr. Patrick has been the Regional Administrator for four years. Prior to joining the FTA, Bob spent 18 years as the General Manager of the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority in Concord, California.

In November, Bob was present at the 17th Annual Louisiana Public Transit Conference held in New Orleans. He spoke at the opening session and contributed to several others. Bob provided valuable information to Louisiana urban providers in the "Annual Urban Eclectic Roundtable Discussions" held on Tuesday, November 16th and everyone was given an opportunity for some one-on-one time during "Breakfast with Bob" held on Wednesday morning.

Immediately following "Breakfast with Bob," he was kind enough to spare some time to talk about two issues that are hot topics with FTA and affect all of us in the public transportation field: Safety & Security and the United We Ride program.

Safety & Security

A major thrust of FTA over the past several years has been to provide training on Safety & Security issues to the 30 largest transit providers in

...FTA is reaching out to all providers, urban and rural, in an effort to supply information on Safety & Security issues.

the nation. Three of the 30 are right here in Region VI; New Orleans, Dallas and Houston. The next major thrust will be to provide that same training to the largest 50 providers, which will include Austin and San Antonio.

However, FTA is reaching out to all providers, urban and rural, in an effort to supply information on Safety & Security issues. FTA created a video called "Transit Watch" that focuses on security issues facing transit providers and what employees can do to increase the security of their system. Laura Wallace, a Community Planner at Region VI, gave a presentation at the conference on transit security issues and attendees got a chance to view the new video.

The "Transit Watch" video would make an excellent addition to any existing or future Safety & Security program. The security awareness would be dramatically increased if the providers in Louisiana could have their employees watch the video.

The new "State Standard" will also be a great boon to Safety & Security issues once adopted. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development was the first state to

(Continued on page 8)

Newsletter Contents

FTA's Robert Patrick in Louisiana
Page 1

Notes From the Top
Page 2

Announcements & Events Calendar
Page 3

Spotlight Article
Page 4

17th Annual Conference
Page 5

Governor's Poverty Summit
Page 7

From the Capital...
Page 8

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Notes from the Top

While reflecting over our past year's accomplishments, I realized that a lot has happened in the DOTD Public Transportation Section. It has been a very busy year. We've lost several staff members and gained several replacements, added and trained two new rural transit providers, developed and submitted to the Federal Transit Administration the first state Bus Safety & Security Standard in the nation, co-hosted the Annual South West Transit Association conference in Baton Rouge, provided six workshops on various topics and held two annual conferences (or at least it feels that way thanks to Hurricane Ivan).


Our new staff includes Vicki Brown, Sheila Robinson, and Randi Adams. Randi joined us on 9/29 as our Administrative Secretary. Sheila joined us on 11/8, a week before our annual conference, as Assistant Program Manager for the Rural Program. Vicki joined us on 11/15 (the day of our annual conference – what an ice-breaker!!) – as Assistant Program Manager for the Elderly and Disabled Program. All three are great additions to the Public Transportation staff.

With the addition of the Parishes of Plaquemines and Tangipahoa, Louisiana now has a total of 44 public transit systems operating in 39 parishes, 32 of which receive rural public transit funds directly from DOTD. The Plaquemines Community Action Agency and the Tangipahoa Council on Aging both began providing rural public transit services in July of this

year. We are pleased to announce that both agencies are doing well.

Just as Safety & Security is a national priority, it is as well a Louisiana state priority. As most of you know, the DOTD staff seriously renewed its efforts on Bus Safety & Security after 9-11. Our efforts intensified during the Summer of 2003 when we began work on a Statewide Bus Safety & Security Standard. The Standard has been reviewed by FTA and changed to accommodate their recommendations. As you read in the cover story, our Bus Standard was the first to be submitted in Region VI as well as the nation. We hope to have the first adopted Standard in the Region/Nation. Additionally, we have produced a template Bus Safety & Security Plan for agencies to use in developing their Plans.

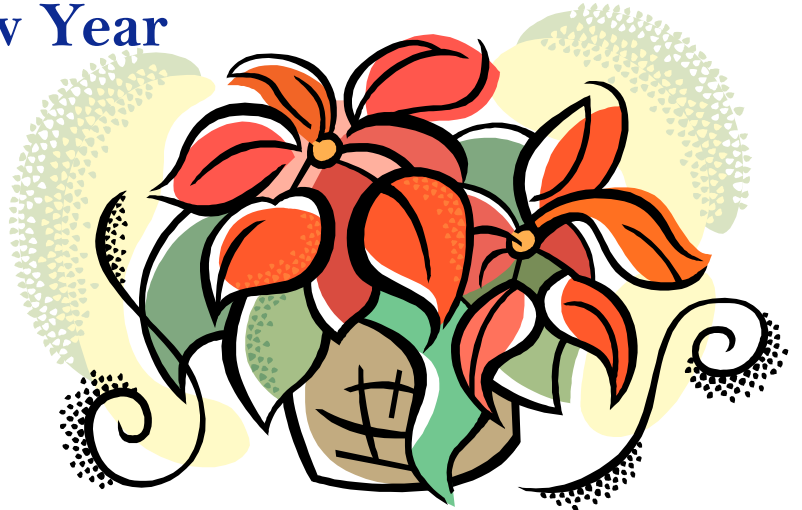
Of course we did not actually have two annual conferences this year, but it sure felt that way. As most of you know, the 17th Annual Public Transit Conference was scheduled for September but was cut short by Hurricane Ivan after one day of pre-conference training. The conference was rescheduled for November 15-17 and was a huge success – of course the New Orleans location helped! Attendance at this year's conference reached an all time high of 213. We think the agenda topics and, of course, the change of venue to New Orleans influenced participation.

The entire Public Transportation Section staff wishes you a happy and safe holiday season! 



Announcements

**Best Wishes for a
Very Merry Christmas
And A Safe and
Happy New Year**



**From All of Us at
DOTD Public
Transportation**

Events Calendar

APTA Conferences

International Best Practices Workshop
How Consensus Standards Improve ITS
January 27-28, 2005 Orlando, FL

General Manager Seminar
Jan 30—Feb 1, 2005 Sarasota, FL

Legal Affairs Seminar
February 6-8, 2005 Miami, FL

Marketing & Communications Workshop
February 20-23, 2005 Tampa, FL

TransITech Conference
February 23-25, 2005 Long Beach, CA

APTA Legislative Conference
March 6-8, 2005 Washington, D.C.

For more information: www.apta.com

Other Upcoming Conferences/Training:

South West Transit Association
25th Annual Conference & Expo
January 23-25 Houston, TX
www.swta.org

TRB 84th Annual Meeting
January 9-13 Washington, D.C.
www.trb.org/calendar

Passenger Service and Safety (PASS)
January 26-28, 2005 Savannah, GA
www.ctaa.org/training/

2005 Railway Security Forum & Expo
Jan 31—Feb 1, 2005 Washington, D.C.
www.railwayage.com

NTI Courses:

TEAM-Web

January 10-11, 2005 Islandia, NY

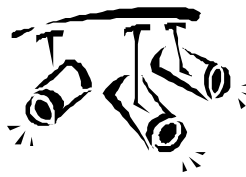
Basic Cost and Price Analysis and Risk
Assessment
January 10-14, 2005 San Francisco, CA

Market-Based Ridership Strategies
January 10-11, 2005 Albany, NY

Terrorist Activity Recognition and
Reaction
January 18, 2005 San Jose, CA

For information: www.ntionline.com

Transportation Safety Institute Classes
Courses are offered around the country
on various topics throughout the year.
For more information, please visit:
www.tsi.dot.gov



Spotlight on...



A New CATS In Baton Rouge

The Capital Area Transit System or CATS, formerly known as the Capital Transportation Corporation, has a new look to go along with its new name. The transit vehicles all sport purple, blue and gold along with a slew of paw prints.

Baton Rouge is a huge college town and proud of it... there are the Louisiana State University Tigers whose colors are purple and gold and the Southern University Jaguars whose colors are blue and gold. To reflect the pride of both universities, CATS has adopted a color scheme that incorporates both LSU's purple and gold and Southern's blue and gold. The transit vehicles are also adorned with paw prints to symbolize both cats.



Fans have asked Dwight Brashear, Chief Executive Officer of CATS, from which cat was the paw prints taken. Dwight's answer is always the same; "It's a generic paw print, which favors neither the jaguars nor the tigers but reflects our area's pride in both." Mr. Brashear and the entire staff at CATS are excited about the community interest generated by the new name and look.


Bus Rapid Transit

The new name and look are part of an overall effort to improve services and the perception of transit in the Baton Rouge area. As part of CATS' ongoing efforts to improve transit services, they are exploring the possibilities of bringing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to the Baton Rouge area.

While light rail is a topic of discussion in Baton Rouge, it is a costly proposition. On average, it cost between \$30 and \$40 million per mile to implement light rail in an area and densities are an issue. To support light rail, you must have a large number of people living in close proximity and Baton Rouge, like most cities in the South is not packed tightly enough.

Alternatively, BRT is much less costly. On average, BRT costs around \$5 million per mile to implement and provides greater flexibility. Bus Rapid Transit utilized standard rubber wheel buses yet provides the quality of rail transit. BRT utilizes exclusive lanes and signal priority on urban arterials and HOV lanes on the interstate. Travel times for passengers utilizing BRT are greatly improved.

BRT has been implemented in cities like Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Denver. However, the FTA is convinced that BRT will work in an area the size of Baton Rouge. CATS and the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) have been in contact with FTA officials who are excited about the prospects.

CATS, CRPC, FTA, DOTD Public Transportation, and the National Transit Institute are planning a one-day workshop on Bus Rapid Transit in Baton Rouge. The workshop will introduce the topic to local decision makers and is being scheduled for early in 2005. 

17th Annual Public Transit Conference



After a cancellation in September due to the threat of Hurricane Ivan, the Public Transportation staff worked quickly and diligently to reschedule the 17th Annual Louisiana Public Transit Conference. Although the obstacles were many



Washington Parish Public Transit receives FTA award from Bob Patrick.

and the time short, the conference was rescheduled for November 15-17, 2004. The new date would not have been possible without the assistance of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), our host transit system, the Regional Planning Commission, and the staff at the JW Marriott on Canal Street in New Orleans. We are proud to say that the Public Transportation staff along with our transit partners pulled off a hugely successful conference.

The hotel's accommodations and food were absolutely reminiscent of old New Orleans and were superior in every respect. The location, just across from the famous New Orleans French Quarter, was an added bonus... that's lagniappe for you locals.

The big evening event was a dinner cruise on the Riverboat Natchez down the mighty Mississippi River, which provided a spectacular view and more traditional New Orleans cuisine. From the comments, a good time was had by all. Our thanks, again, to the RTA for providing transportation to and from the event (not to mention the free passes for all attendees to ride the streetcars for the duration of the conference). Conference participants walked out the hotel front door, stepped on the newly constructed Canal Streetcar line, which dropped them off at the Toulouse Street Wharf to catch the Riverboat Natchez. Although the return trip was provided, many participants couldn't resist the allure of the his-

toric French Quarter and opted for a leisurely stroll before returning to the hotel.

The conference schedule was filled with education, inspiration and entertainment. For the first time, the conference kickoff began with lunch and included a posting of the colors by the Louisiana National Guard, Jackson Barracks in New Orleans. The invocation was given by Reverend Tilley of the RTA and the National Anthem was sung by Dwight Boyd of the St. Charles Council on Aging.

The keynote speaker was Cedric Grant, the newly appointed Assistant Secretary at DOTD. Mr. Grant provided an educational powerpoint presentation of DOTD and its operations along with an outlook on the future of multimodal planning activities.

Another hit was the boisterous motivational speaker, Bruce Hamilton, from Lake Charles. He had the audience so pumped up with his motivating "Committed To No Bad Days" presentation, they were cheering in the aisles. There's no doubt why they call him "Mr. Hyper." Bruce is a high energy kind of guy with a 'can do' attitude that has never seen a half empty glass... they are all half full (if not completely full). Many came away with renewed vigor about what can be achieved with a perpetual positive attitude. Bruce's rowdy comical presentation was probably the closest we came to getting kicked out of the hotel.

The awards presentations were particularly enjoyable this year. The Public Transportation staff presented three 'Extra Mile' awards to



RTA receives FTA award from Bob Patrick.



Lake Charles Transit System receives FTA award from Bob Patrick.

(Continued from page 5)

agencies for their efforts on special projects or programs during the year and three 'Appreciation and Recognition' certificates to individuals who provided special assistance during conference planning and implementation. RTA



RTA receives Extra Mile award from Carol Cranshaw.

received a 'Host Agency Appreciation' award from LPTA and DOTD, for their assistance with the conference. The FTA also presented special achievement awards to three agencies:

DOTD Extra Mile Awards

- ❖ Presented to New Orleans Regional Transit Authority for Extraordinary Cooperation and Achievements—Fixed Guideway Safety Oversight Program, 2004. The award was accepted by several RTA employees present at the conference.
- ❖ Presented to Good Earth Transit System for Extraordinary Cooperation and Participation—Bus Safety & Security Program—Design Model, 2004. The award was accepted by Wendell Voisin.
- ❖ Presented to the Regional Planning Commission—Appreciation for Many Years of Dedicated Service to LA-DOTD and the Transit Industry, 2004. The award was accepted by Walter Bost.

Appreciation and Recognition Certificates

- ❖ Presented to Reverend James Tillie, RTA, New Orleans.
- ❖ Presented to Nick Silvey, RPC, New Orleans.
- ❖ Presented to Pat Gagliano, Regional Planning Commission, New Orleans.

FTA Awards

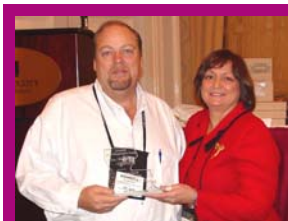
- ❖ Presented to RTA, New Orleans.
- ❖ Presented to Lake Charles Transit System, Lake Charles.
- ❖ Presented to Washington Parish Public Transit, Franklinton.

Other conference highlights included:

- ❖ The opening session was a panel discussion that included Bob Patrick, FTA Region VI Administrator, Dan Broussard, DOTD Statewide Planning Engineer, Bill Deville, General Manager of RTA, Patrick Judge, Executive Director of the LPTA, Rick Weaver, Program Manager with APTA, and Chris Zeilinger, Assistant Director of CTAA.
- ❖ Attendees got a first look at FTA's new Transit Watch video during Laura Wallace's presentation on the agencies security initiatives.
- ❖ Reverend Tillie, RTA, gave a presentation on the simulated security drill that RTA and the New Orleans Office of Emergency Preparedness conducted with other area agencies this past summer.
- ❖ DOTD's Program Manager for Human Resources Training & Development, Ranzy Montet, gave a presentation on the 'Do's and Don'ts' of preparing and conducting job interviews. Many were pleased with the information received during this session.
- ❖ Another winner was the presentation on Title VI Compliance issues given by Marva Jacques, FHWA; Grace Chatman, DOTD Compliance Programs; and John Sweek, FTA Region VI. Of special interest was the information on the Presidential Directive to Federal Agencies to ensure people who are Limited English Proficient have meaningful access to programs, services and benefits.



RPC receives Extra Mile award from Carol Cranshaw.



Good Earth Transit receives Extra Mile award from Carol Cranshaw.

Overall, the conference was a success. The food was great, the agenda was educational, and the entertainment was wonderful... and the location! You know what they say... location, location, location. 🇺🇸

Governors Poverty Solutions Summit



The Monroe Civic Center was the site of the Solutions to Poverty Summit held on December 6 and 7, 2004. Congressman William Jefferson and Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco hosted the Summit. Knowing the tough subject matter, the Governor got an early start with registration at 7:00 am and Opening Sessions at 8:00 am.

Governor Blanco's agenda centered on solutions to poverty not a commiseration session on the state of poverty. Her focus was on a better educational system, economic development efforts, work-force training, and community involvement through neighbors helping neighbors.



Donna Lavigne and Michelle Horne at the DOTD information booth.

and other programs that have been successful in other areas. A panel of national experts on poverty provided ideas for Governor

Blanco to consider, including ways to restructure the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.




Solutions to Poverty Panel, including Governor Blanco.

They were among several other state government agencies providing information to attendees.

The DOTD staff set up a booth with information on public transportation in Louisiana. Information was available on the various types of public transportation services that are provided throughout the state and who provides them. They also had applications and other material for those interested in providing new service.



Harold Beck at the DOTD information booth.

Of particular interest to many of those that visited the booth was the extent of the public transportation services available in their area. The staff also got a chance to advertise their web based Resource Guide that gives information on public transportation providers by parish. The staff was excited about the turnout and overall response to the Summit. 

(Continued from page 1)

submit a proposed “State Standard” addressing Safety & Security. Many other states are now following Louisiana’s lead.


Safety & Security will be a funding issue that all transit providers will be interested in during the coming years. Much like airports immediately following 9-11, transit properties will be a major funding focus in the coming months and years.

Bob Patrick relayed that, “Governor Blanco should be getting a letter soon about the grant approval. Coordination must come from the top down.”

United We Ride

The “United We Ride” program is another initiative that is a hot topic with FTA and is especially near and dear to Bob’s heart. He worked closely with Bryna Helfer, FTA’s United We Ride guru, last year on the new national initiative. During the first round, 45 state applications were received for funding under the program and all 45 were approved.

Bob relayed that, “Governor Blanco should be getting a letter soon about the grant approval. Coordination must come from the top down.” When Bob was in California, there were several pots of money and no real coordination. He said, “With the advent of President Bush’s Executive Order on Coordination, it will become an increasingly important issue in every government agency, federal and state.”

Region VI is moving forward with the United We Ride program. Last year, four out of the Region’s five states initiated the planning process. The fifth state has now begun planning; Louisiana was among the first four. Bob concluded his thoughts on United We Ride saying, “Nationally, there is great interest in the this program.” 



From Capital Hill...

On December 6, 2004 the FTA published a United We Ride State Coordination Grants Announcement. Louisiana was among the 45 approved applications. State agencies selected for State Coordination Grants may begin application procedures upon receipt of letters from FTA Administrator Jennifer L. Dorn informing them of their selection. Applicants will be required to submit their electronic grant applications by February 28, 2005 and grant activities and fund drawn down should be completed by February 28, 2006.

Those states selected for funding were found to meet the objective of the United We Ride initiative which is to implement the President’s Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination by breaking down barriers among Federal programs to enhance coordination of human service transportation programs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and lower income populations who depend on transportation services to access employment, health, and other community services. The purpose of the State Coordination Grants is to increase the overall capacity of states to deliver comprehensive and coordinated human services transportation that meets the needs of transportation-disadvantaged individuals and to increase cross-agency collaboration to facilitate coordination, enhance services, and address redundancies of programs and services. These grants may be used to assist states in conducting a comprehensive state assessment using the United We Ride Framework for Action; developing a comprehensive state action plan for coordinating human services transportation; or, for those states that already have a comprehensive state action plan, to implement one or more of the elements identified in the Framework for Action. 